

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for generating a report at a client computer based on data resident at a server computer, the method comprising, at a client computer:
 - 5 a) obtaining from a server computer by way of a remote procedure call a list of items to be included in a report, the list including a reference associated with each of the items;
 - b) for each of the items in the list, generating a request for data associated with the item, the request including the reference associated with the item;
 - 10 c) forwarding the request to the server computer by way of a remote procedure call;
 - d) receiving from the server computer the requested data associated with the item;
 - 15 e) after receiving the requested data serially repeating (b), (c) and (d) for subsequent items in the list; and,
 - f) rendering a report based on the requested data.
- 20 2. The method of claim 1 comprising, prior to first generating a request for data associated with the item, requesting from the server computer, and obtaining a report definition, the report definition including an identification of one or more specific data to be requested for each item, wherein generating a request for data associated with the item comprises generating a request for the one or more specific data.
- 25 3. The method of claim 1 comprising, prior to obtaining the list of items, requesting from the server computer, and obtaining a report definition, the report definition including a search criteria
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wherein obtaining the list of items comprises requesting from the server computer a list of items which match the search criteria.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the report definition comprises an order for presentation of the items in the list and obtaining the list of items comprises requesting from the server computer a list of items presented in the order.
5. The method of claim 3 wherein the report definition includes an identification of one or more specific data to be requested for each item, wherein generating a request for data associated with the item comprises generating a request for the one or more specific data.
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- 15 6. The method of claim 1 comprising requesting from the server computer and obtaining a report format, wherein rendering the report is performed in accordance with the report format.
7. A method for making data available to users at a plurality of distributed network-connected user computer systems, the method comprising:
 - a) maintaining entirely in a high-speed memory of a server computer a data store comprising a data heap containing a number of data and a data reference vector comprising a plurality of records, each record corresponding to a datum in the data heap;
 - b) receiving at the server computer a request for data, the request comprising a reference corresponding to a record in the data reference vector;
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 - c) locking the data store;
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reference uniqueness value to the data reference vector uniqueness value and generating an exception if the reference uniqueness value does not match the data reference vector uniqueness value.

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14. The method of claim 7 wherein each record in the data reference vector comprises a data kind value and the method comprises setting the data ind value to match a data type of the corresponding datum.
15. The method of claim 14 wherein the reference comprises a data kind value and the method comprises comparing the reference data kind value to the data reference vector data kind value and generating an exception if the reference data kind value does not match the data reference vector data kind value.
16. The method of claim 7 comprising periodically backing up changes in the data store to a slower storage medium.
- 20 17. The method of claim 16 comprising periodically backing up the entire data store to the slower storage medium.
18. The method of claim 8 wherein the remote procedure call passes object parameters.
- 25 19. The method of claim 8 wherein forwarding the requested data to a client computer system comprises generating a reply message, the reply message comprising a header and a body, the header comprising a first part and a second part, the first part of the header comprising a flag and a length, wherein the method comprises encrypting the second part of the header and the body

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of the reply message before forwarding the reply message to the client computer system.

20. The method of claim 19 comprising compressing the body of the reply message before forwarding the reply message to the client computer system.

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21. A method for making data available to users at a plurality of distributed network-connected user computer systems, the method comprising:

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- a) maintaining entirely in a high-speed memory of a server computer a data store;
- b) establishing a remote procedure call connection between the server computer and a client computer;
- c) receiving by way of the remote procedure call connection a request for data from the data store;
- c) locking the data store;
- d) based on the request, retrieving the requested data from the data store;
- 20 e) unlocking the data store; and,
- f) forwarding the requested data to the client computer system by way of the remote procedure call connection.

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22. A computer programmed to implement a method according to claim 1.

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23. A program product comprising a medium carrying computer-readable signals, the signals comprising instructions which, when executed by a computer processor cause the computer processor to execute a method according to claim 1.

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24. A memory-resident data structure as shown in Figure 3.